



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich – Marine Corp Ball

Remarks of Ambassador Bleich at the 236th Marine Corp Ball, Canberra

(As prepared for delivery – November 19, 2011)

It is a great honor to join with you all tonight to celebrate the 236th Birthday of the United States Marine Corp.

Over the last few years, I've had the privilege to serve with several Marines here at the Embassy and many Marine Security Detachments around the world: at the White House, in Afghanistan, in the UAE, the Philippines, and in places around the world. We've drilled for events together. We've gone through inspections together. We've stood together in the ice cold rains and wind at Lake Burley Griffin on the anniversary of September 11.

We've also had Happy Hours together. And we've repaired the damage from Happy Hours together. We've traveled together. We've searched Hawaii for the car that Major Westhoff lost while we traveled together. And tonight, and later this week on Thanksgiving, we'll break bread together -- to give thanks for the many opportunities and blessings we share.

I know these young marines, and to a person, there is no group of people with better values, better self-discipline, greater courage, and greater concern for doing the right thing, than the United States Marines.

Now, as I told some of you last year, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt put this a little differently. She came out here in 1943 and dedicated our Embassy in the depth of WWII. And at that time she said: "The Marines I have seen around the world have the cleanest bodies, the filthiest minds, the highest morale, and the lowest morals of any group of animals I have ever seen. Thank God for the United States Marine Corps!" Thank God for the United States Marine Corps.

Three days ago, we had another President pay tribute to you all. When President Obama addressed the full Parliament of Australia, he gave an historic 25-minute address about the future of this region, and our commitment to the region. But when it came to demonstrating that commitment, the President needed only a few words. When it came to assuring Australia and its neighbors that we would be here for humanitarian aid, that



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich – Marine Corp Ball

we would be here for disaster relief, that we would be here to ensure free navigation and open trade, and that we would be here to ensure peace and stability for all nations, it took only five words: “we’re sending you our Marines.”

So Happy Birthday to the marines. I salute you each time I enter the Chancery and each night when I leave. And we especially salute you tonight.

Thank God for the U.S. Marines. And may God Bless them. May God Bless Australia. And May God Bless the United States of America.